

Traffic Safety Facts

Crash•Stats



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A Brief Statistical Summary

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Seat Belt Use in 2006 — Use Rates in the States and Territories

In 2006, among the 43 States, U.S. Territories, and the District of Columbia whose rates are currently available, seat belt use ranged from 63.5 percent in Wyoming to 96.3 percent in Washington. These results are from probability-based observational surveys conducted in accordance with criteria established by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to ensure reliable results. Compliance with the criteria is verified annually by NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis.

The 2006 surveys also found the following:

- Eight States and Territories achieved use rates of 90 percent or higher — Washington, Michigan, Oregon, California, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Texas, and New Jersey.
- Jurisdictions with stronger belt-enforcement laws continue to exhibit generally higher use rates than those with weaker laws. Mississippi strengthened its belt law to a "primary" enforcement law, effective May 2006. This State saw a jump in use from 60.8 percent in 2005 to 73.6 percent in 2006. Alaska and Kentucky also passed primary laws that took effect in 2006.

Seat belt use rates in the States, U.S. Territories, the District of Columbia, and nationwide from 2000-2006 are listed in the following table. States provided the 2006 seat belt use rates in response to grant requirements under 23 U.S.C. §§ 402, 406. The agency has continued the use of uniform survey criteria developed under TEA-21 (available at 23

CFR Part 1340) in order to determine the acceptability of a State's survey process and submitted seat belt use rates. Rates in jurisdictions with primary belt enforcement during the calendar year of the survey are shaded in the table. However, the law might not have taken effect when the survey was conducted. The 2003 rate for New Hampshire was not reported by the State. It was obtained by Preusser Research Group using methods compliant with 23 CFR Part 1340. **The 2006 belt use rates of some States are not available at this time (NA). This table will be updated periodically as rates from other States become available.**

National Seat Belt Use Rate

Seat belt use nationwide was 81 percent in 2006, as measured by NHTSA's National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS). NOPUS provides NHTSA's official measure of nationwide use because it is the only probability-based observational survey of seat belt use in the United States. Additionally, NOPUS does not employ sampling frame exemptions allowed of the States and Territories in Section 157 (namely, the omission of up to 15 percent of low-population areas and the permission to observe data solely in vehicles stopped at stop signs or stoplights), and so provides a more accurate measure of nationwide use than would be obtained by combining the use rates from the States and Territories.

Table: Seat Belt Use in States, U.S. Territories, and Nationwide, 2000-2006 (As of 12/19/06)

State or U.S. Territory	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Reduction in Nonuse 2005-2006
Alabama	70.6%	79.4%	78.7%	77.4%	80.0%	81.8%	82.9%	6%
Alaska	61.0%	62.6%	65.8%	78.9%	76.7%	78.4%	83.2%	22%
Arizona	75.2%	74.4%	73.7%	86.2%	95.3%	94.2%	NA	NA
Arkansas	52.4%	54.5%	63.7%	62.8%	64.2%	68.3%	69.3%	3%
California	88.9%	91.1%	91.1%	91.2%	90.4%	92.5%	93.4%	12%
Colorado	65.1%	72.1%	73.2%	77.7%	79.3%	79.2%	80.3%	5%
Connecticut	76.3%	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%	82.9%	81.6%	83.5%	10%
Delaware	66.1%	67.3%	71.2%	74.9%	82.3%	83.8%	86.1%	14%
Dist. Of Columbia	82.6%	83.6%	84.6%	84.9%	87.1%	88.8%	85.4%	-30%
Florida	64.8%	69.5%	75.1%	72.6%	76.3%	73.9%	NA	NA
Georgia	73.6%	79.0%	77.0%	84.5%	86.7%	89.9%	NA	NA
Hawaii	80.4%	82.5%	90.4%	91.8%	95.1%	95.3%	92.5%	-60%
Idaho	58.6%	60.4%	62.9%	71.7%	74.0%	76.0%	79.8%	16%
Illinois	70.2%	71.4%	73.8%	80.1%	83.0%	86.0%	87.8%	13%
Indiana	62.1%	67.4%	72.2%	82.3%	83.4%	81.2%	84.3%	16%
Iowa	78.0%	80.9%	82.4%	86.8%	86.4%	87.1%	89.6%	19%
Kansas	61.6%	60.8%	61.3%	63.6%	68.3%	69.0%	73.5%	15%
Kentucky	60.0%	61.9%	62.0%	65.5%	66.0%	66.7%	67.2%	2%
Louisiana	68.2%	68.1%	68.6%	73.8%	75.0%	77.7%	74.8%	-13%
Maine	NA	NA	NA	NA	72.3%	75.8%	77.2%	6%
Maryland	85.0%	82.9%	85.8%	87.9%	89.0%	91.1%	NA	NA
Massachusetts	50.0%	56.0%	51.0%	61.7%	63.3%	64.8%	66.9%	6%
Michigan	83.5%	82.3%	82.9%	84.8%	90.5%	92.9%	94.3%	20%
Minnesota	73.4%	73.9%	80.1%	79.4%	82.1%	83.9%	83.3%	-4%
Mississippi	50.4%	61.6%	62.0%	62.2%	63.2%	60.8%	73.6%	33%
Missouri	67.7%	67.9%	69.4%	72.9%	75.9%	77.4%	75.2%	-10%
Montana	75.6%	76.3%	78.4%	79.5%	80.9%	80.0%	79.0%	-5%
Nebraska	70.5%	70.2%	69.7%	76.1%	79.2%	79.2%	76.0%	-15%
Nevada	78.5%	74.5%	74.9%	78.7%	86.6%	94.8%	NA	NA
New Hampshire	NA	NA	NA	49.6%	NA	NA	NA	NA
New Jersey	74.2%	77.6%	80.5%	81.2%	82.0%	86.0%	90.0%	29%
New Mexico	86.6%	87.8%	87.6%	87.2%	89.7%	89.5%	89.6%	1%
New York	77.3%	80.3%	82.8%	84.6%	85.0%	85.0%	83.0%	-13%
North Carolina	80.5%	82.7%	84.1%	86.1%	86.1%	86.7%	88.5%	14%
North Dakota	47.7%	57.9%	63.4%	63.7%	67.4%	76.3%	79.0%	11%
Ohio	65.3%	66.9%	70.3%	74.7%	74.1%	78.7%	81.7%	14%
Oklahoma	67.5%	67.9%	70.1%	76.7%	80.3%	83.1%	83.7%	4%
Oregon	83.6%	87.5%	88.2%	90.4%	92.6%	93.3%	94.1%	12%
Pennsylvania	70.7%	70.5%	75.7%	79.0%	81.8%	83.3%	NA	NA
Rhode Island	64.4%	63.2%	70.8%	74.2%	76.2%	74.7%	NA	NA
South Carolina	73.9%	69.6%	66.3%	72.8%	65.7%	69.7%	72.5%	9%
South Dakota	53.4%	63.3%	64.0%	69.9%	69.4%	68.8%	71.3%	8%
Tennessee	59.0%	68.3%	66.7%	68.5%	72.0%	74.4%	78.6%	16%
Texas	76.6%	76.1%	81.1%	84.3%	83.2%	89.9%	90.4%	5%
Utah	75.7%	77.8%	80.1%	85.2%	85.7%	86.9%	88.6%	13%
Vermont	61.6%	67.4%	84.9%	82.4%	79.9%	84.7%	82.4%	-15%
Virginia	69.9%	72.3%	70.4%	74.6%	79.9%	80.4%	78.7%	-9%
Washington	81.6%	82.6%	92.6%	94.8%	94.2%	95.2%	96.3%	23%
West Virginia	49.8%	52.3%	71.6%	73.6%	75.8%	84.9%	NA	NA
Wisconsin	65.4%	68.7%	66.1%	69.8%	72.4%	73.3%	75.4%	8%
Wyoming	66.8%	NA	66.6%	NA	70.1%	NA	63.5%	NA
Nationwide	71%	73%	75%	79%	80%	82%	81%	-6%
Puerto Rico	87.0%	83.1%	90.5%	87.1%	90.1%	92.5%	92.7%	3%

Note: Rates in jurisdictions with primary belt enforcement during the calendar year of the survey are shaded.

For questions regarding the above reported data, contact Donna Glassbrenner at 202-366-3962, or Jianqiang Ye at 202-366-3603. This issue of Crash•Stats and other general information on highway traffic safety may be accessed online at www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-30/ncsa/AvailInf.html